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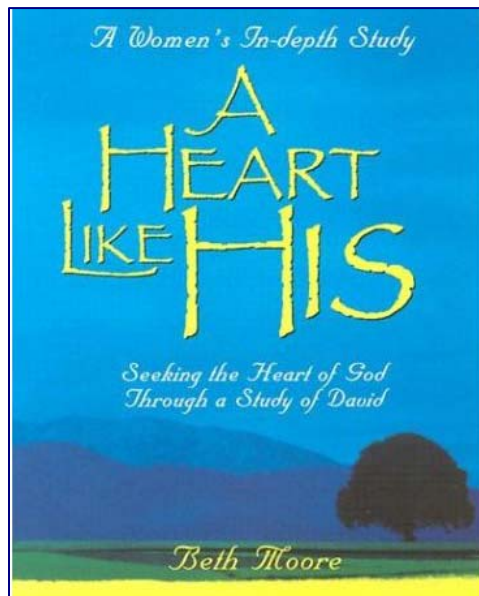
**WHEN IT'S GOOD, IT'S GREAT—NOW WHAT?**  
[DAVID'S VIRTUES: 2 SAMUEL 7-10]

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# WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

**MARCH 23, 2008**

FROM THE **MASTER WORKS** SERIES STUDY OF:



## WHEN IT'S GOOD, IT'S GREAT—NOW WHAT?

[DAVID'S VIRTUES: 2 SAMUEL 7-10]

**A** duck jumped up on the bar and asked the bartender, "Do you have any grapes?" The bartender looked at the duck and said, "No." The duck came back the next day and jumped up on the same bar and said to the same bartender, "Do you have any grapes?" And the bartender looked at the duck and said, "No. I told you that yesterday" He came back the third day and jumped up on the same bar and asked the same bartender the same question, "Do you have any grapes?" And the bartender said, "No. I told you that yesterday and the day before. If you come back again I'm going to nail your feet to the bar!" But he came back the next day and jumped up on the same bar and he looked at the bartender and said, "Do you have any nails?" The bartender said, "No." Then he said, "Do you have any grapes?"

Although that story from Max Lucado has absolutely nothing to do with our lesson this week about the life of David or his virtues, I thought it might be a funny ice-breaker to start a lesson about good times and how we handle them—putting you in the right frame of mind. Today we continue with Week Four of our study by Beth Moore on the life of David from *A Heart Like His* and I pray that you spent some in-depth time this week digging into the scriptures from **2 Samuel 7-10**.

You will recall that in 2 Samuel 7, David and the nation of Israel were at peace. King David had fought countless wars, defeated his surrounding enemies and brought genuine stability to Israel (v 1). Peace was at an optimum, things were quiet in battle and the nations left Israel alone. At that time, David wanted to build a temple. He decided that the ark of God should be stationed somewhere and in something more stable, more permanent and more magnificent. The place of worship should be more than a hanging curtain, a moving object, or a traveling box. Although his request was rejected, his prayer was accepted because he came to God as he was, stripped of all pretension and accomplishments.

Also, in our study this week, we saw that David now had the power to do whatever he desired. This is the time when we shall see David at his best. In chapters 8-10, we find David in his finest form—although that's temporary as we shall see in Chapter 11 next week. Anyway, David employs the power God has given to accomplish God's will. Just like it says on the board, *"when things are good, they're great—but now what?"*

*How do YOU handle the good times—when all is at peace in your life, your family and in your business? Have you experienced a time when you were so overwhelmed with both the person of God and His actions in your life that you simply had to praise Him?* As we look into our scripture lesson, think about this for a moment. After all the years of struggle, David found himself seated on the throne in Jerusalem. Remember it took about 15 years before he was anointed as king in Judah after his anointing by Samuel and then he held that position for another 7½ years. So, at age 37—more than 20 years after his initial anointing by Samuel—he has arrived. King of Israel—plus there are no problems and he's at rest with the surrounding enemies. Then Nathan the prophet delivered the message that God would bless not only David, but also his children. He must have been overwhelmed. No wonder he *"went in and sat before the LORD"* (2 Samuel 7:18) and poured out his heart. Listen to these words from **2 SAMUEL 7:18-20** as to David's response to the promises of God:

*<sup>18</sup>Then King David went in and **sat** before the LORD, and he said: "Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? <sup>19</sup>And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD? <sup>20</sup>"What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign LORD.*

Think about this a second, not only has God given all these wonderful promises to David—times are truly great—but God also

told him he's not the one to build the temple: *"It won't be you, David ...it will be your son, Solomon."* Yet, look at how David responds. Look at his posture. He just sat down. Isn't that interesting? Maybe he went into his bedroom in his home—or maybe his study. He may have sunk down on the floor and just silently looked up. He had just heard God tell him, *"The answer is 'no'. You're not going to see that dream. I'm pleased to know such a noble thought was in your heart, but it's not in My plan."* So he sat down. And just like a child he begins to express grateful questions to the Lord. Here is more evidence that David was a man after God's own heart.

How many of you can recall your childhood well enough to remember a time when one of your parents told you not to do something? At such times you may have even thought to yourself, or said, "Just wait until I grow up, because then I'm going to . . . ." Sometimes such statements are amplified: "When I grow up, I'm going to be the president, and then I'm going to . . . ." Power is a test of our character. When we can do whatever we want, what we choose to do reveals to us, and to others, what we truly are. That's what we see in David—he certainly has the power now.

*Upon news that Jimmy Carter had won the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize, people in the media rushed to Plains, Georgia, a population of more than 600, to interview the former president of the United States, who was one of 150 candidates for the top prize. Other U.S. Presidents who received the award were Theodore Roosevelt (1906) and Woodrow Wilson (1919), but Carter was the only former president to receive it. Woodrow Wilson, the last president to win the prize, won it more than eighty-eight years ago.*

*At a press conference for the reporters that invaded the small town to congratulate and interview Carter for winning the \$1-million grand prize, the indifferent ex-president said, "After this crowd leaves, I'll be riding back downtown on my bicycle. It didn't change my life when I became a state senator, or governor, or president*

*or a defeated candidate for re-election, and I don't think this will change my life, either. My roots are too deep here to be changed, and I'm too old."*

How are your roots? Are they too deep to be changed by good fortune? Would your life be any different today if you'd won the Powerball lottery of, say, \$275-Million last week? Would you still be here on this Easter Sunday? Think about that—but look also at what King David did during his good, peaceful and prosperous times. He sat down and praised his LORD! WOW!

The one characteristic and virtue that we saw in David this week that was probably dearest to God's heart was his desire for praise. This had to be God's favorite, don't you think? His heart that was so tender towards worship can be seen more clearly in the psalms that he wrote—and that are do dear to many of us today for all kinds of circumstances we encounter in life. For the rest of the class, as Beth Moore did in her video lesson this week, we're going to spend time in those psalms that God used David to write about this virtue of praise and worship. We'll get to see what made David tick, what made him such a man of worship—and learn what true, authentic praise really is.

We're going to look at what praise is and will be looking at nine facts about praise, as each one points us toward a definition for praise. Although not in any particular order, if there is one particular one that should be prioritized, it's probably **PSALM 9:1**. Follow along as I read: ***<sup>9</sup>I will praise you, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonders.*** Right there in the center of that verse is probably the most important aspect of praise. He says, "I will praise you"—and then he almost gives the definition the only way it can be done—"***I will praise you...with my whole heart.***" **Number one** on our list, and maybe most important, praise is **FOCUS**. Praise is focus upon God. How often do you completely focus on God—that moment when every bit of our focus

is dropped from every other distraction and we give God for those moments are entire heart and mind. That is praise!

Have you ever sat in a worship service, sang hymns, stood at the proper time, sat when told—but yet your mind just wandered? Your mind was filled with distractions of what you had to do that day, or maybe that week--or even how you'd pay a particular repair bill. Is that worship? No—and it's not praise either, is it? Why? Because we never got to a place where our mind and our heart was completely cast upon God Himself. It takes complete focus! (EX: LITTLE CHILDREN SITTING WITH YOU OR OTHERS IN CHURCH?!?)

So, how can we do this? A great example is what happened to me the other morning driving in to work. As I drove, I was listening to one of my praise and worship CDs, just singing along and not paying attention to my surroundings, when I suddenly noticed the woman driving beside me waving at me. She apparently saw me singing and using waving mannerisms and must have thought I was waving to her. A little embarrassing, however, and my focus immediately changed. I was in the "zone."

So, for us to really be released and praise Him, I think first and foremost, we must be FOCUSED. If you have trouble, even in your quiet time at home, with this, PRAY about it. Ask God to help you focus on Him. Sometimes we have to back up and go to the very simplest things of our faith. And one of them is that when we're having a struggle with something, God wants us to pray and ASK for help. And that's one He will answer—because it's in His Will.

**Number 2:** Praise is **NOT CONFINED**. As Beth Moore pointed out in her video this week, this is a wonderful point about praise in case you're trying to picture praise in a "certain way." We can't box in praise or give it lots and lots of rules. A review of the psalms reveals various Hebrew words that are each translated into the word "praise" in English. Now, listen to what those words mean to get a better idea of what this characteristic of praise is all about.

Listen to the definitions of these various words: *“to speak out and confess; a laudation, a hymn or song; to play (as an instrument) or make music; and, to be bright, to shine, to boast, to praise (radiance).”* All of those things are praise. It’s praise to speak out and to confess, just like it is praise to sing a song or a hymn—or to play and instrument or make music. It’s praise to simply show it to be radiant with the love and activity of Christ in your life. Beth Moore reminds us that you can say it, sing it, play it or you can show it. Praise doesn’t have bounds! Anyway you are focusing on the wonders of your God, that’s praise! You can’t fit God in a box, yet we have such trouble with some of the music or instruments in the church today, don’t we? Why? Praise is unconfined and we’re free to praise in any of those ways and it’s acceptable to God.

**Number 3:** Praise is a **CHOICE**. Praise is something we choose to do. It’s not necessarily something we FEEL LIKE doing. In fact, perhaps the best time to praise is when you DON’T feel like praising. Praise is a choice we make—we decide whether or not to worship. We decide whether or not to let the distractions go and to allow God, even in the middle of all our trials and tribulations, to give us a single-minded focus upon the LORD of LORDS. It’s a choice. Look at **PSALM 103: 1-5** with me: *<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. <sup>2</sup>Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits- <sup>3</sup>who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, <sup>4</sup>who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, <sup>5</sup>who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

We don’t know what David is going through here, but he is praising his God. In this Psalm, he’s telling his soul to praise—David is talking to his own soul. As you read the context of the entire chapter, you’ll see that he is extolling the virtues of God to care for His children. And he’s reminding God that they’re just like the grass of the field. So somewhere in there, he must have an element of fear and he’s asking God to help him praise. Look at what he says again: Praise him O my soul, let all that is within me

praise His Holy Name. He is attempting to change his focus, obviously from his circumstances onto his God.

To follow-up on this idea about praise being a choice, look with me at **PSALM 42**. Although this is not one written by David, it helps explain what we're talking about here. Let's begin reading in **Verse 5**: *<sup>5</sup>Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and <sup>6</sup>my God...* Do you hear what he's saying? He says to his soul, "Why so downcast? Why do you feel like this?" In our world today, we'd be asking, "Why do you feel so depressed?" "What's wrong with me today?" You know we all have days like that, don't we? Sure. Now, he's going to give himself the prescription for feeling better—he knows the prescription and he's writing himself for feeling better. "Say, you know what you need?" *"Put your hope in God..."* Attach yourself to God—you're letting someone else, or something else, disappoint you because your hope (or **EXPECTATION**) is in someone else but GOD. So, put your hope back in God and *"yet praise him"*, whether you feel like it or not. He's writing himself and changing his perspective.

Remember, when you don't feel like praising—praise anyway. That's the time to praise. I heard just this week about a little book called *"10,000 Things to Praise God For."* In checking it out, you wouldn't believe some of the simplest little things on the list. It says if you're having a crummy day, praise Him for believers in Russia. Praise Him for the color of the flowers or for the ocean or for the season. If it's hot, praise him that it's not so hot that you can't bear it. Can you think of, say, 100 things this morning to praise God for—no matter how you feel or what's happening in your life? David found the key.

The next characteristic, **#4**, is that praise is to become a **HABIT**. Look with me at **PSALM 34:1**, also written by David: *<sup>1</sup>I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.* Now, we wonder, how in the world can I praise Him at all times? I

believe that how this really applies to us is that we are to get in the HABIT of praise! When something good happens, don't just say, "Thank goodness!" Say, "Praise God!" And mean it—don't just say it. Start responding to everything that happens in your life—little things we think of as the silly details as well as the big things. But when something happens, think of some way that can turn into a praise report and say it to Him. Say it out loud and you'll watch that FOCUS begin to be drawn to the throne of grace—the One who can intervene in your behalf. It has to become a HABIT.

See if you can find that little book with 10,000 things to praise God for to help you begin this week. Start looking for ways to praise Him. Praise Him, Praise Him, Praise Him.

Next, **#5**, praise becomes compulsory when there is true **INTIMACY**. Something we'll find about praise is that praise becomes compulsory when we have a true intimacy with God. Now this is one of my very favorite forms of praise and many of you can identify here. There are times that come in our lives if we are in a relationship with Christ that we cannot help but praise. You have to somehow tie us down or hold your hand over our mouth to keep us from praising—but then we'd still praise in our minds. Can you recall a time today when you HAD TO PRAISE? Something happened and it was compulsory that you had to praise God. That comes from intimacy—truly knowing Him and watching Him work. Let's see this and David's compulsion in a great psalm, **PSALM 63:1-3**:

*<sup>1</sup>O God, you are **MY** God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. <sup>2</sup>I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your **power** and your **glory**. <sup>3</sup>Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. <sup>4</sup>I will praise you as long as I live...*

David just had to praise Him—he knew Him so well. David, what is it that makes you dance down the streets of Jerusalem? See, he

knew Him intimately and was not able to help but praise. Is that you? When I have the occasion to go to the Mall with Beverly, I often will sit out in the middle in the chairs and just watch the people. Ever do that? You wouldn't believe how many people frown and simply look like life is such a drudge. If David saw our world today, he'd have to say, *"If you knew who I know, you could not frown!"* David has seen God's power and His glory. He saw Him in the sanctuary and simply could not keep from praising Him.

Have you ever known Him so well that you know for a fact His love is better than life? If you've experience that, then you know what it is to have praise that is compulsory—to praise Him because you've got to. If not, ASK God to give you a heart to know Him. ASK God to let Him see you—to be revealed to you and to see His power and His glory. He'll answer that prayer.

**Number 6:** Praise is **CONTAGIOUS**. I know this one for a fact, so turn with me to **PSALM 52:9** and listen to David's words again so you'll know it too. *<sup>9</sup>I will praise you forever for what you have done; in your name I will hope, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints.* Here God is causing Him to desire to praise God in the middle of the people in the sanctuary, and then he calls upon Him to praise Him in the midst of the people. The last line says, *"I'll praise you in the presence of the PEOPLE."* Also, look at **PSALM 34:2**, *My soul will boast in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.* That's evidence that there is an effect on the people around us. We know that just by having children. Recall the saying that *"when Mama's not happy, nobody's happy!"* Why do we say that? It rubs off. Praise does the same thing.

Next, praise Him for who He is **UNIVERSALLY**. As we make this point, look at **PSALM 8**—very familiar words most likely. Now, listen to how David approaches his God in these verses: *<sup>1</sup>O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. <sup>2</sup>From the lips of children and*

*infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. <sup>3</sup>When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, <sup>4</sup>what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?*

He's reminding himself at this point of who God is universally—and that affects us **PERSONALLY**, and that's our next point. We need to look at these together because they impact one another. How we see Him universally will impact how we see Him **PERSONALLY**. So, he says to Him, *"I see who you are. I see what you've done and I think who am I for you to know me completely and for you to want me to know You?"* He's amazed that the God who did all that, loves him and wants a personal relationship with him. Do you see how he's getting it in perspective and what praise is doing for him? This is the God of the heavens and the earth. WOW!

Turn to **PSALM 144: 1-4** as we continue looking at this **PERSONAL** perspective: *<sup>1</sup>Praise be to the LORD **my Rock**, who trains **my** hands for war, **my** fingers for battle. <sup>2</sup>He is **my** loving God and **my** fortress, **my** stronghold and **my** deliverer, **my** shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me. <sup>3</sup>O LORD, what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him? <sup>4</sup>Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.* Do you see what he is saying, *"He is MINE. He belongs to ME!"* Listen to that personal approach. As we grow day-by-day, I think we are far more in awe today that God loves us, communicates with us, than the day we first received Him—because the more we see Him universally, the more we sit back like David and go, *"Who am I that you would talk to me..."* And yet you do—you are God, but you are MY loving Savior.

The last one, **PSALM 40**. Let's read the verses and then make the point. **Psalm 40:1-3:** *<sup>1</sup> I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. <sup>2</sup>He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm*

*place to stand. <sup>3</sup>He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD.*

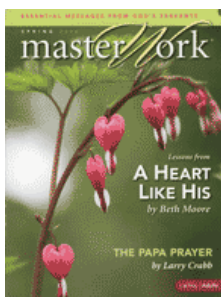
Has He lifted anyone here out of the slimy pit? He allows us to praise him with a **NEW SONG**. God is doing something new in your life continually. May He give us eyes to see. We know He's continually working that completing work in us—new things in our lives from an old plan before the foundation of the world. And He will continually put a new song in our hearts. We don't have to rely on yesterday's testimony and tell the same testimony over and over and over. God is continually working and we add on another chapter and another chapter and another.

I'm almost 60 years old and I'm having one of the most magnificent chapters of my entire life with the LORD JESUS. He's put a new song in my mouth and in my heart these last ten years. I'm not the same man I was ten year's ago. He's doing that in all of our lives if we'll watch for Him and ASK Him to give us hearts to recognize the perfect works of God—the excellence.

It's been a long time since we talked about keeping a journal in this class. But what a great way to record your praises and the requests you take before Him. Everytime I look back over my journal, I'm amazed at what God has done. It's easy to forget it all as I grow older. Sometimes the journal can actually become your own psalms to God, as you truly realize what He's done in your life and you want to give Him the praise He alone is worthy to receive.

David learned how to praise God—in both the good times and the bad. How about you?

Let's pray!



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MARCH 23, 2008